



LAND-BASED SOURCES OF MARINE DEBRIS

What Is Marine Debris?

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration defines marine debris as any man-made object discarded, disposed of or abandoned that enters the coastal or marine environment. Some of the most common debris items are cigarette filters, beverage bottles and cans, food wrappers, grocery and trash bags, fishing line, nets and gear.

Where Does It Come From?

All types of marine debris can be traced to one source – people. People’s mishandling of waste materials and a host of other items while on land constitutes the bulk of the marine debris problem. Debris is also blown into the water or carried by creeks, rivers, storm drains and sewers into the ocean.



What Are the Impacts?

Debris can smother sensitive ecosystems and pollute and clog watersheds, adversely affecting water quality and habitat.

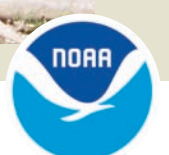
Discarded fishing line, gear and other debris can entangle and drown wildlife species. Animals can also ingest debris, which can lead to starvation and/or choking.

Medical and personal hygiene debris can enter waterways when sewer systems fail or overflow. Syringes and broken glass pose obvious dangers to bare-footed beachgoers.

Grocery and trash bags, fishing line and other debris can wrap around boat propellers and clog seawater intakes, causing costly damage and becoming a safety hazard.

What **You** Can Do to Prevent Marine Debris

- Reduce, reuse, recycle. Choose reusable items and use fewer disposable ones.
- Retain all pieces of fishing line, net or other litter for proper disposal in trash containers.
- Keep streets, sidewalks, parking lots and storm drains free of trash – they empty into our oceans.
- At the beach, park or playground, dispose of all trash in the proper receptacles or take your trash home with you. Pick up any debris you see while out.
- Serve as an example to others. Get involved in cleanups in your area and encourage others to help keep the beaches and oceans clean.



NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

www.marinedebris.noaa.gov